

It is a tribute as well to our distinguished colleague, Senator BYRD, that he has had the remarkable service of such an outstanding member of his staff over the years. We will all miss Jim very much. We thank him for his extraordinary services to the Senate and the nation, and we extend our best wishes to Jim and his family for a long and happy retirement in the years ahead.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 1

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I think it is essential that we go forward with our education reform package. A lot of good work has been done in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Senators on both sides of the aisle—Republican and Democrat—have worked hard. They reported out a bill overwhelmingly from the committee. A great deal of negotiation has gone on since then between members of the committee, the House and Senate, both parties, and the administration. A lot of the reform language has been agreed to, with a lot of understanding about the amount of funds that will be necessary to implement this legislation.

But the important thing is that we go forward. I do not think you could ever get every detail worked out and agreed to in advance. It is called the legislative process. You go to the Chamber, you have debate, you have amendments, you have votes, you get a result, and you pass the bill.

Over the past couple years, I have quite often been criticized that I would not let the Senate work its will. And now, for a week, the Democrats have been blocking going to the bill, blocking the motion to proceed to the education bill.

This is the highest priority for this President, I believe for the Congress, both parties, and for the children.

I believe that if we go forward and have a good debate and have amendments that we will get a result that will be good in improving the quality of education in America.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now turn to the consideration of Calendar No. 23, S. 1, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Mr. WELLSTONE. Reserving the right to object, I say to the majority leader that where I would dissent from his remarks is that actually there is a lot of negotiation going on. I think

Senators on our side have made some very basic points. One is, it is important what is in the bill before it comes to the floor. Two, I think we are quite far apart, although hopefully we at some time will be together about whether or not, in fact, there will be the investment in children, to make sure that the children and the teachers and the schools have the tools to succeed. This is really a choice between whether or not you want to put so much into, I say to the majority leader, Robin-Hood-in-reverse tax cuts, with over 40 percent of the benefits going to the top 1 percent of the population, or you are willing to make the investment in education and children.

I am so pleased the President has announced the goal of leaving no child behind. But it cannot be done on a tin cup budget. We are looking at the whole issue of kids with special needs, the IDEA program, the title I program, afterschool programs, teacher recruitment, smaller class size, and doing something about these dilapidated buildings.

So my hope is we will be able to resolve what I think are important questions. But I think the Democrats are very committed to this discussion about education, very committed to doing it right. If, in fact, we are going to call this piece of legislation, as the President has, the BEST, then we ought to be doing our best for children. I have no doubt that the people in Minnesota and the people across this country are looking for a real commitment of resources and the Federal Government living up to its obligation. We should be accountable. Just as we call for the teachers and the children to be accountable, we should be accountable as well. That is what we are going to be strong on.

I object.

Mr. LOTT. To clarify, does the Senator object to bringing up and going forward with the education bill?

Mr. WELLSTONE. I said I object to going forward with the education bill while we are in negotiation, while we do not know what is in the bill, while we do not have a commitment yet on the investment of resources and the Federal Government and the Senate and the House living up to our commitment to children and education in the country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I now withdraw the pending motion to proceed to S. 149.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right. The motion is withdrawn.

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. LOTT. I now move to proceed to S. 1, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

I say to the Senator from Minnesota, there have been many days of negotia-

tion. A lot of progress has been made. Everybody acknowledges that. But this bill should have been taken up in March. Now here we are almost in May and we are still negotiating. If we are going to have everything wrapped up before it ever comes to the floor of the Senate, there would not be much for the Senate to do around here.

Ordinarily, you get as much of an agreement as you can, get a bill reported out, and bring it to the floor. Negotiations are not going to end. They are going to continue. But on some of them we are not going to be able to reach an agreement.

I say to my colleague, in a State that is trying to improve education, and, again, as a son of a schoolteacher, if just money would solve the problem, we would have a higher quality of education in America than we do today.

We have spent well over \$130 billion over the past several years for the title I program. I don't want to demean that program. It has done some good and can do more good, if we give a little more flexibility at the local level where the money can be used, where it may be used differently in Minnesota than it would be in Texas, give a little flexibility to make sure you are addressing the needs of those title I children in an appropriate way.

But just money is not enough. We have to have some real reforms. Money is part of it. I admit that. The President has asked for more money for the reading program. The President has indicated he supports more funding for title I and for IDEA and for bilingual education.

We are making progress. He is moving in the right direction. But I don't know if we can ever come up with enough money in this area or a lot of the other areas to suit every Senator. They can always find some way—it is easy—to say "give me more."

One of the reasons we ought to have tax relief is to let the people keep a little bit more of their money to help the children with their needs. That is why I think we ought to double the child tax credit; let the parents get more of the benefit of their money to help their children with their needs. Let them decide if they need a little tutoring, if they need a computer, whatever it may be.

One of the reasons parents can't always do what they need for their own children is that they don't get to keep enough of the money they earn. Why in the world would we take from the mouths of labor the bread that they have earned? That is a quote from Thomas Jefferson—a great line.

At any rate, some Senators are adamant about objecting to proceeding to the education bill. I think that is a mistake. I think we ought to move forward. I suspect that some of the amendments that would be offered—and maybe the Senator from Minnesota would support and I would oppose—probably will pass. What are they worried about? We can bring this to a satisfactory conclusion that would be